

[54] **CUSTOMER-BASED PRODUCT DESIGN MODULE**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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[51] **Int. Cl.⁶** **G06F 17/60**

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434/118

[58] **Field of Search** 705/1, 7, 10; 434/107,
434/118, 365, 350

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

The invention may be embedded in products or services that contain a microprocessor and a facility for communication. The resulting two-way interactive media enables relationships to be built with individual customers and groups of customers throughout a product's or service's life cycle. Customers may also be provided with automatic, portable in-use access to constantly updated information during product use, to increase user success and reduce costly and error-filled processes of acquiring product expertise. The invention may interact with customers, gather information from customers, communicate customer information securely to a vendor or external third party(ies), construct and transmit new pre-programmed interactions to the customer communications system in the product, and analyze and report customer information. This new medium provides a worldwide way to transform the use of products and services into interactive two-way dialogues; add in-product performance measures and any specific assistance needed; educate and train customers as their product uses change; permit vendors to discover and respond instantly to market shifts and opportunities; generate and test new ideas; enable customers to guide a vendor or a third party(ies) in satisfying their needs; and other means of using in-product communications to fit business operations with rapidly changing customers and markets. By making two-way learning and information delivery part of the product and service environment, vendors or third parties can become faster, more efficient and accurate in designing, delivering and supporting what customers want to buy.

37 Claims, 42 Drawing Sheets

